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GOSPEL AND CULTURES PAMPHLET 16

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*The Encounter Between the Gospel  
and Neo-Confucian Culture*

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# *Introduction*

In the late 1940s, the South Korean government imported Idaho and Maine potatoes from the United States for farmers to plant in lieu of the relatively diminutive local variety. The first year the farmers grew a wonderful crop of large and delicious potatoes. But each year the potatoes harvested were smaller and smaller; and eventually they were not much bigger than the indigenous variety. The native soil made the difference.

This image evokes the transplanting of a Western-based form of Christianity into a local cultural soil which is very different from the home soil. What happens when the Christian message is transplanted into a new situation with different traditions and a different culture? From the interaction of the old and new, which Christianity will grow? What is the impact of the attempt to root the Christian faith in a local tradition and worldview? And how does the local cultural soil transmute the integrity of the Christian faith? Specifically, in terms of the topic of this pamphlet, how did Christianity encounter Korean culture, especially its Neo-Confucian elements, and what came out of that encounter? What was the mutual fertilization of Christianity and Korean culture?<sup>1</sup>

One of the most remarkable phenomena in the recent history of Christianity has been its rapid spread in Korea. Altogether the Christian population in South Korea now exceeds 25 percent of the total, almost rivalling the number of Buddhists. In 1984 Korea celebrated the centenary of the Protestant missionary movement. Although Protestantism arrived in Korea at least a century later than Catholicism, it has spread more widely and vigorously. Moreover, Christians have shown remarkable leadership in the political, economic, social and cultural life of Korea, far out of proportion to their numerical strength.

The expansion of Christianity in Korea is especially noteworthy in view of the fact that Korea, with its long and varied traditions of shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and other folk religions, had been a country cultur-

ally remote from the West. Indeed, Korea long considered itself a "small China", maintaining the Confucian tradition with stubborn persistence longer than China and remaining until the 1880s the last Asian country to open its closed door to the West.

Tokugawa Japan was exposed to Christianity earlier than Korea. Western missionaries were active there for about a century (1550-1650) before their work was banned, to reappear only in the latter half of the 19th century. By contrast, at the beginning of the 17th century it was Korean envoys to China, not Western missionaries, who began to bring home the knowledge about the West and Catholicism. Interestingly, Koreans did not distinguish Catholicism from Western science, referring to both as Western learning (*sohak*).<sup>2</sup> But they were more inclined to accept Western science than Catholicism, about which they had only reserved curiosity.<sup>3</sup> For the Neo-Confucian intellectuals who first came into contact with Christianity, the religion was an entirely alien thing which they had no way to grasp except by viewing it through the prism of their old Asian religious and cultural patterns. Naturally, they sought elements in their own cultural experience that might serve analogically to provide a fit between the old and the new. Shamanism was more or less indigenous to Korea, and as such it has been the oldest religion in the country. Taoism had preceded the coming of Buddhism to Korea, but it was not as organized and influential as Buddhism. Although during the Yi dynasty (1392-1910) Buddhism was eclipsed by Neo-Confucianism, the orthodox religion and philosophy, it still remained the most influential form of religion in Korea.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For theoretical background and orientation I have benefitted from Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 1985; Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*,

Maryknoll, Orbis, 1992; and David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, Maryknoll, Orbis, 1991. I am also grateful to Professor Edward W. Poitras of Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, for his comments on this text.

<sup>2</sup> See Pak Chi-won, *Kugyok Yolha ilgi* [Diary of a trip to Jehol], 2 vols, Seoul, Minjok munhwa ch'ulp'anhoe, 1968, 2:25-27, 441-44; Hong Tae-yong, *Tamhon yon'gi* [Account of a trip to Yenching], *Yonhaengnok sonjip* [Selected records of a mission to Peking], 2 vols, Seoul, Songgyun'gwan taehakkyo, 1960-62, 1:397-98.

<sup>3</sup> See Hong Yang-ho, *Igye chip* [Collected works], 38 *kwon*, 17 *ch'aek*, 1843, 15:27a-31b.

# 1. God and Salvation

## The name of God

Among other Christian ideas, Koreans found the name of the Christian God very difficult to grasp because there was no exact Korean equivalent for it. They resolved this problem by adopting the Confucian term *Sangje* (*Shang-ti* in Chinese), meaning "the Ruler Above" or "the Sovereign on High", which 17th-century Jesuit missionaries in China used to name their God. According to Augustinus von Hallerstein, the God of Christianity was the *Shang-ti* mentioned by Confucius, but not the Taoist "Jade Ruler Above" (*Yu Huang Shang-ti*, Korean *Okhwang Sangje*).

While Hong Tae-yong (1731-1783) suspected that Christianity had stolen the Confucian term,<sup>1</sup> the prominent reformist scholar Yi Ik (1681-1763) was less dismissive of Christianity. On matters of practical morality he saw no basic difference between Christian and Confucian teachings. He even thought Christianity had elements that could greatly help human beings to restore their original goodness. Yi Ik learned about the Christian worship of the "Lord of Heaven" (*Ch'onju*, Chinese *T'ien-chu*) from Matteo Ricci's famous *Ch'onju sirui* (*T'ien-chu shih-i*, or "True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven", 1601). But even he questioned whether Christianity might not be like the Buddhist worship of and belief in Buddha. Accordingly, he suspected that Christianity would end up in pernicious illusion just as Buddhism had. In sum, he concluded that the Christian belief in a transcendent God was incompatible with Neo-Confucian cosmology and metaphysics.<sup>2</sup>

What complicated the issue was that, besides the above-mentioned Chinese term for God, Koreans had always used the vernacular term *Hananim* (the heavenly one) or *Hanunim* (heavenly god) to refer to a familiar, omnipotent, personal and beneficial god, who promised his devotees prosperity, health and well-being. They had also long associated *Hananim* with the mythical being Tan'gun, the progenitor of the Korean race and the founding father of their culture, as well as with Buddhist deities and the Taoist Way of Heaven.

Thus the shamanistic *Hananim*, the one personal supreme God who rules over the myriad of things in heaven and earth, including human beings, found more favour among them than the Confucian *Ch'onju*. *Hananim*, as the god par excellence among the pantheon of shamanistic gods and spirits, is the one to whom people can turn for mercy and help in times of trouble. He is also a great judge who can mete out punishment and rewards for human deeds. As such, he was very familiar to Korean people of all ranks and backgrounds.

Adopting the indigenous term *Hananim* enabled Koreans readily to accept the idea of the Christian God in vernacular terms deeply rooted in local life and experience. Because they already believed in the existence and power of the highest deity, it was relatively easy for them to read their traditional idea of god into the Christian idea of God.

This affinity would account in part for the relatively easy acceptance of Christianity by Korean people. But *Hananim* could not entirely represent the radically different Christian concept of a transcendent God. Nor could it quite come to terms with the Neo-Confucian notion of the Supreme Ultimate or Heaven. Eventually, Korean Catholics opted for the term *ch'onju*, the Lord of Heaven in Chinese ideographs, to represent the Christian concept of God, whereas the Protestant missionaries chose the authentic local term *Hananim* or *Hanunim*.

The use of these various terms would implicate Korean Christians in a temptation to understand the Christian God syncretistically, drawing flexibly on Confucian, shamanistic, Buddhist and Christian elements in their received religious traditions. For example, the shamanistic *Hananim* is one who answers people's prayers for such utilitarian this-worldly ends as good harvests, sons and health. Similarly, *Hananim* in the sense of the Buddhist *Bodhisattva* is one who answers people's prayers to alleviate their suffering. And the Buddha to come (*Miruk* or *Miatreya*) would impress Koreans as a messianic figure or saviour who would come to deliver



them from sufferings in this world. On the other hand, the Confucian understanding of *Hananim* would incline one to identify God with that innate quality within the human person which gives one conscience and a moral sense of goodness.

We see here the curious coexistence in the Korean Christian idea of God of a this-worldliness and an other-worldly orientation. It is not unusual in the inculturation of Christianity to see Christian ideas and terms coming into conflict with native ones, but in the case of Korea the so-called term question did not significantly obstruct Christianity from making its way.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Christian idea of salvation**

Besides the Christian idea of God, Korean Neo-Confucians were puzzled by the Christian doctrines of paradise and hell. The idea of reward for good and retribution for evil inherent in these doctrines appeared to them quite similar to that of Buddhism. Sin Hu-dam (1702-1761), for example, saw the essence of Catholicism in the idea of worshipping the Heavenly Lord in order to gain personal salvation. But he believed that seeking heavenly blessing and avoiding punishment in hell came from a selfish, "benefit-oriented" mind in human beings. Such an egoistical motivation, he thought, stood in contrast to the Confucian moral idea of sincerely preserving the goodness inherent in human nature as conferred through a "reverential fear of Heaven". Confucianism was simply devoted to the problem of how to become a person by actualizing authentic human nature without any selfish motive, whereas Catholicism approached God with the utilitarian motivation of seeking blessings in heaven and avoiding calamities in hell.

Such an attitude was unacceptable to Sin. He saw Christianity thus as a heterodox religion, not unlike the ancient egoistical Chinese teaching of Yang Chu, who sought only his personal good by completely ignoring the common good of the community. For that matter, Christianity was also akin

to Mo Tzu's heterodox teaching of egalitarian and abstract or universal love among human beings, defying the authority of fathers and hierarchical and reciprocal human relations. Sin sized up Christian morality as individualistic or egoistical because it is based on the "mind to seek benefit" or personal interest, which "covets life and dislikes death". Buddhism had a similar mentality. If all these ancient Eastern teachings had been condemned as heterodox because of this egoistical orientation, Christianity too should be rejected.<sup>4</sup> Sin was not alone in holding this view. Pak Chi-won (1737-1805), a well-known Korean advocate of learning from the Western science and technology then popular in Peking, also wondered from a Confucian perspective how the Westerners could advocate the doctrine of heaven and hell while attacking similar Buddhist ideas.<sup>5</sup>

In understanding Christianity from the point of view of their Neo-Confucian humanism, these scholars found more differences than analogical similarities between the two traditions. They understood Christianity largely through the publications of the Jesuit missionaries who had tried to impress the Chinese that Christianity was essentially compatible with Confucianism, but not with such heterodox teachings as Buddhism and Taoism. For this reason, the Jesuits had endorsed the Confucian moral teachings as "ancient wisdom" and borrowed Confucian language. But while the Korean Confucian scholars who were preoccupied with the problems of moral self-cultivation thus found a point of contact for the alien religion, Confucian morality encouraged one to be good without expecting any reward: a morally worthy person was not supposed to act virtuously out of any anticipation of reward or punishment. All that mattered was a moral self-cultivation which culminated in the fulfilment of one's social duties in this world. Accordingly, Confucians accused Christianity of appealing to self-interest, much like Buddhism.

It was Mahayana Buddhism that introduced to Korea the theme of individual salvation with supernatural help — an

idea alien to Neo-Confucianism. Buddhism promoted the ideas of paradise and hell as a means of encouraging ignorant people to be good. Because the common people had long been steeped in the Buddhist idea of retribution, the Christian doctrine of heaven and hell came across to them naturally. Consequently, they took to Christianity more readily than the Neo-Confucian intellectuals did. The common people also found in Christian doctrine the idea of celestial gods who were expected to watch over and help human beings, responding to their pleas for practical advantages such as good harvests, good fortune, health and long life. To them the attraction of Christianity lay in its promise of efficient supernatural salvation, in the hope of gaining the blessings of heaven while avoiding eternal punishment.

### **The critique of An Chong-bok**

The Neo-Confucian scholar An Chong-bok (1712-1791) made a more systematic critique of Christianity, especially in his noteworthy *Ch'onhak mundap* (Questions and answers on heavenly learning), 1785. To An, who learned about Christianity from his teacher Yi Ik and from the writings of Matteo Ricci, Didaco de Pantoja, Emeric de Chavagnac and others, it was ridiculous and blasphemous for Christianity to call itself a "heavenly" learning and to claim exclusive superiority to all other religions.<sup>6</sup> He identified the Christian idea of renouncing vengeance for the sake of love of the enemy with the doctrine of universal love (*chien ai*) advocated by Mo Tzu.<sup>7</sup> According to Confucianism, it is most natural for people to love those who are nearest to them in terms of blood relations and then extend this love to others who are not related. The Christian ideal of universal love, which commands one to love everybody, thus seemed abstract and unnatural. But while Mo Tzu referred to heaven in terms of this world, the Westerners meant by heaven the world to come. Thus, in An's view, "the Westerners are more ridiculous than the Mohists". For An, Christianity was in reality

another Buddhism, which was a latecomer and, if anything, inferior to Buddhism.<sup>8</sup>

Here again, An criticized Christianity on the basis of a Confucian humanism, reaffirming human moral nature and its essential goodness over against the contrasting doctrines of Buddhism and Christianity. Such humanism has no room for belief in a supernatural will or divine law. The end of the human person is to "serve Heaven", to cultivate one's Heaven-given nature. To cultivate the "Heavenly Nature" is to obey the "Will of Heaven". One can achieve ritual propriety or harmony with society and the world through self-cultivation. Then one can freely follow the traditional hierarchical authorities and the established conventions and customs. As long as one cultivates oneself and thereby achieves ritual harmony with society and the world, one does not need to worry about sins, atonement, asceticism, salvation and so forth. Therefore, An asked, "Why should one pray, morning and day, like the Westerners [missionaries], for the forgiveness of past sins and for the deliverance from hell as the sorcerers do?"<sup>9</sup> The creation, the fall of Adam and Eve, human sins and salvation by God through Christ were all "self-contradictory", "absurd" and "heterodox". So were the death of Christ on the cross, his ascension into heaven and his Second Coming.<sup>10</sup>

An viewed the Christian concept of a creator God who is above his creation as another confusing doctrine, which he denounced on the basis of the Confucian concept of Heaven (*Ch'on* or *T'ien*). He understood creation in terms of the Supreme Ultimate (*T'ai-chi*), the Two Forms (*yin-yang*) and the Five Elements. The Supreme Ultimate or Heaven, which is the structural principle of all things in the universe, is immanent in the human person. It is that innate spirit and moral goodness which is inherent in every individual and at the same time in myriad things in heaven and earth. For this reason, the human person is one with the universe — that is, Heaven, Earth and ten thousand (in other words, all) beings. An therefore denied any opposition between the self and

the world, the mind and the body, the divine and the cosmic, the sensory and the rational. In this respect his Neo-Confucian mode of thought was fundamentally different from the Christian heritage of Greek thought and mediaeval scholasticism. There was a chasm between morality, religious attitudes and social and political order based on Confucianism on one hand, and those rooted in Christianity on the other.

As a Confucian intellectual oriented to this world, An Chong-bok also saw the message of Christianity as dangerous in its preaching of "miracles" that were rare and "spirits" that were "invisible", stirring up people and misleading them into absurd ways.<sup>11</sup> The eschatological hope and political theology of liberation inherent in Christianity reminded him of the dangerous peasant rebellions linked with secret and heterodox religious societies in China.<sup>12</sup> Christianity appeared to him as a subversive religion which devalued the world as "the world of trouble, a transient world and an inhuman place for animals".<sup>13</sup> It was a religion that "hated the world", thereby "putting an end to the duty that binds the monarch and the subjects". Christianity seemed to him to devalue the Confucian culture and "all the beneficial accomplishments of the sage's practice of the Way".<sup>14</sup>

In Confucianism the family is central. One owes one's life to one's parents, and it is through them that one defines one's relation to the world. Therefore the foremost and cardinal religious obligation is filial piety. In contrast, Christianity demands that the individual follow the will of God, which is seen as transcending and relativizing the claims to loyalty made by the family, the tribe and the state. To An, this demand for self-denial in order to follow the will of God made of Christianity a religion that preached "hatred of one's self". A corollary of this was that it also taught the "hatred of one's parents", from whom one had received one's own body.<sup>15</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Hong, *Tamhon yon'gi*, 1:243, 397-98.
- <sup>2</sup> Yi Ik, *Songho sonsaeng chonjip* [Complete works of Yi Ik], 70 *kwon*, 36 *ch'aek*, 1922, 55:27b-31a; *Songho saesol* [Detailed explanations of various topics by Yi Ik], 2 vols, Seoul, Kyonghui ch'ulp'ansa, 1967, 1:368.
- <sup>3</sup> See James S. Gale, "The Korean View of God", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. 12, March 1916, pp.66-70; Yun Song-bom, *Han'guk chok sinhak* [The Korean Theology], Seoul, Sonmyong munhwa sa, 1972.
- <sup>4</sup> *Sin Tonwa Sohak pyon* [Discourses on Western learning by Sin Hu-dam] in Yi Man-ch'ae, ed., *Pyogwi p'yon* [Collected writings on the defence of orthodoxy against heterodoxy], Kyongsong, Pyogwisa, 1931, 1:14a-47a; see also Ch'oe Tong-hui, "*Sin Hu-dam ui Sohak pyon e kwanhan yon'gu*" [A study of Sin Hu-dam's discourses on Western learning], *Asea yon'gu* [Journal of Asian Studies], Vol. 15, no. 2, June 1972, pp.1-27 and the attached *Yonbo* [Chronological biography], pp.197-217.
- <sup>5</sup> Pak Chi-won, *Kugyok Yorha Ilgi*, 2:26-27, 441-44.
- <sup>6</sup> An, *Ch'onhak mundap. Sunam sonsaeng munjip* [Collected works of An Chong-bok], 28 *kwon*, 15 *ch'aek*, 1900, 9b-10a.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.10a-21b.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10ab, 19ab, 20 ab.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9ab.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.16a-19a, 20a-22b.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12b.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.12b-13b.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.14b-15a.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.15b, 19a.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.15b, 19ab.

## 2. *Christian Community and Ancestral Traditions*

### **Loyalty to the church**

The idea that the Christian community or the church claimed a higher loyalty than the natural family was a point of contention with the Confucians, who saw the church's upsetting of traditional family relations as dangerous and perverse. In particular the Catholic monastic practices of chastity and celibacy were perceived as a menace to the natural relationship between husband and wife and to family life based on the cosmic principle of *yin-yang*. The Christian church was thus compared to the *sangha* or monastery which the Buddhists joined by leaving their homes.<sup>1</sup>

Catholic missionaries were also accused of lacking respect for the rules of proper conduct because they intruded on the strict line of segregation between men and women by freely approaching women and allowing both sexes to worship together in their churches. In a culture that required a strict separation of boys and girls as early as the age of seven, this violation of the distance between male and female presented an obstacle to the diffusion of Christianity.<sup>2</sup> It is noteworthy that Christianity helped to break down discrimination against women in Korea by allowing common worship in churches and through women's education. But it was very difficult to change the age-old mores of the people. As recently as the early 1960s men and women were still seated separately on the two sides of the aisle in most Korean churches.

Another obstacle to the conversion of the Confucian Koreans to Christianity was its opposition to the practice of concubinage, which allowed men of the *yangban* (landed scholar-official) class to have many wives. This polygamy was justified on the basis that men of high social standing and wealth should produce male descendants to continue the lineage and ancestor worship. Early marriage was another commonly accepted practice to ensure this continuity. Along with this baneful subjugation of women to men, there was also the practice of secluding women, young and old, except those of lower social standing, within the inner circle of the home. The

corollary of this was that marriages were arranged by parents and the free choice of spouses and pairing off for friendship and association between the two sexes were prohibited.<sup>3</sup>

The institution of concubinage not only degraded women but also discriminated against the children of concubinage, who were excluded from taking the prestigious civil service examination required for service as government officials. As one Christian missionary concluded in rage and dismay, "an absurd philosophy, the dogma of a man-made religion, shadowy legal rights, illiteracy and neglect" combined "to force woman beneath man's level in Korea".<sup>4</sup>

With the development of Korean society since the introduction of Christianity and modern culture, the practices of concubinage and early marriage have been outgrown, and the seclusion of women and prohibition of the free choice of spouses are also passé. Initially, however, the idea of "the Christian household" was a radically innovative one that would revolutionize the very basis of such a society.<sup>5</sup> And even today, in many Korean churches the ordination of women and women's leadership in the church remain controversial.

### **Ancestor worship and Christianity**

In Korea, as in China, there were two types of traditional rites: the Cult of Heaven, that is, worship of and sacrifices to the Ruler Above or Sovereign on High (*Sangje*, *Shang-ti*); and sacrifices to various spiritual beings including one's ancestors.<sup>6</sup> The former was the business of the emperor or the king; and if only this cult had existed, it would probably have been relatively easier for the Christian missionaries to relate their belief in one Heavenly God to both the Chinese and the Korean peoples. But while high officials sacrificed in the ancestral temples of the progenitor of their lineage, ordinary people only had to set up the tablets of their own immediate ancestors and worship them; and it was difficult for the missionaries to deal with this inferior but still important cult of ancestors and other spirits.



The early Jesuit missionaries to China, who had largely catered to the intellectual elite, had allowed converts to maintain the cult of ancestors, because they recognized how fundamental the observance of filial piety was to the social mores of China. They knew very well that denial of this sacred practice to the Chinese converts would implicate them in a revolutionary clash with the very foundation of the social, political and religious order. But the Dominicans and the Franciscans, who were more active later among the common people, considered ancestor worship more in terms of superstitious folk religion and condemned these rites as idolatrous and superstitious. In time the papacy became involved in what came to be known as the Rites Controversy, which lasted a full century until the papal bull *Ex quo singulari* of Benedict XIV in 1742, which absolutely condemned the ritual. The debate was fuelled by a condescending attitude on the part of the West towards the East, an ignorance of other cultures and a spirit of intolerance.

With this famous controversy settled, by 1790 Korean converts had also been ordered by the church not to participate in "superstitious" ancestor worship.<sup>7</sup> The authorities in turn accused converts who chose to abolish the worship of the tablets of their grandparents and parents of "the uttermost wicked crime" and denounced them as "barbarous", "beastly", "murderous", "regicidal" and "heterodox". How contentious this issue was is revealed in the following confession by Yun Chi-chung (1759-1791), a *yangban* convert who was beheaded in 1791 for having abolished the rite:

It is against the cause of the reverence of the Heavenly Lord to disobey his command when one believes him to be a great father. The religion of the Heavenly Lord [Catholicism] bans the tablet of a deceased person in the household of the nobility. Therefore, I would rather be guilty before the persons of noble birth than before the Lord of Heaven, and I buried it under the ground in my house. The religion of the Heavenly Lord also forbids the offering of wine and food. However, when commoners do not erect the ancestral tablet the nation does not

punish them for it. When impoverished literati cannot follow the rites of ancestor worship they are not chastened for it. Therefore, when I did not erect the tablet or worship the ancestor, it was only for the religion of the Heavenly Learning and not for the violation of the law of the nation.<sup>8</sup>

Christian doctrine taught exclusive loyalty to God and allowed for “no salvation outside the church”. This clashed directly with the central tenet of Confucianism, which demanded filial piety as an absolute value and urged people to make sacrifices to ancestors. The position of the church was that the converts should obey God rather than human beings (Acts 5:29), shifting their loyalty from the natural human nexus based on blood and soil to a transcendent point of reference. The church adamantly stood its ground, obliging an either-or choice between the two loyalties. Thereupon, in 1791 the Korean Confucian government officially condemned Christianity as a “heterodox” religion “without king and parents”, a religion that defied the very foundation of the state, the family and society. For almost a century thereafter the Catholic movement in Korea would pay a heavy price for its inflexibility, provoking reactions that resulted in thousands of martyrs.

Just as Christian missionaries in India had provoked a vehement reaction when they confronted the distinctions of the caste system, so the missionaries to China and Korea infuriated the peoples by opposing ancestor worship. By contrast, Buddhism, which had come from India to China and Korea much earlier, had shown more flexibility in adapting itself, embracing more sympathetically the filial piety that was fundamental to the two countries. The Buddhist theory of *karma* held that people’s actions in one existence would decide their fate in their next existence. This theory encouraged people to give alms to monks and donate money to build temples or monuments to promote the well-being of their deceased relatives. This adaptation of Buddhist theory to serve the moral prescriptions of Confucianism fared well with the authorities in both China and Korea — and, for

that matter, Japan.<sup>9</sup> Even shamanism and Taoism in Korea were very accommodating to ancestor worship.

With the coming of Christianity, however, things began to change. Like the Catholics, Protestants also did not make accommodations to the cult of ancestors. The basic orientation of traditional Korean religion to the family did not go well with the relatively individualistic value orientation of the Protestant missionaries of that day. Especially antithetical to the traditional family system and the cult were the new ethical ideals and principles governing marriage and the family — monogamy, free marital choice and sexual and social rights for women — which Protestantism, buttressed by modern individualism and liberal rationalism, introduced.<sup>10</sup>

Because of the irreconcilable differences between Christianity and Confucianism, the problem of rites remained up to recent decades a difficult and emotional issue among Christians and non-Christians in Korea.

### **Changing Korean attitudes towards ancestral rites**

It is commonly held that ancestor rites in South Korea today are in decline. This goes along with the historical trend in the modern world as a result of the advance of urban-centred capitalist industrialization, which works to weaken and disperse the patrilineal kinship groups and families on which ancestral rites rest. The rise of individualism in the sense of self-centredness (*kaeinjuui*) — as distinguished from ethical individualism, which respects the dignity of the person — has made an increasing number of contemporary Koreans forget their ancestors.

Many attribute this to the influence of Western culture, and some even to the influence of Christianity. But while the rise of egoistical individualism may have caused a decline in ancestor worship, what has been occurring may also be seen as the adaptation of an age-old tradition to a rapidly changing political economy, urbanization, new constructs of gender roles and dispersal of family members. For example, with

the rising awareness of women's rights there are indications that adult women are increasingly participating in rites for their husband's and natal kin. Even more remarkable from the point of view of the traditional ban on women's participation, women are even carrying out major ritual roles. Another interesting change is a narrowing of the genealogical range of participants as a result of the mobility of people, population growth, urbanization, monetarization and occupational differentiation — all of which have changed the forms of mutual dependence. Labour-intensive cultivation of rice and other crops made people dependent on each other in self-contained families and clan villages, but modernization has progressively undermined the homogeneity and integration of villages based on common descent and lineage.<sup>11</sup> Altered life-conditions have accordingly led to the emergence of new patterns of social life.

Of particular interest in this context are the traditional death-day anniversary rites (*kijesa*), which take the form among Christians of memorial services (*ch'udo-yebae* or *tosa-yebae*). This interesting compromise between the Christian injunction against the ancestral cult (considered idolatrous, Confucian and shamanistic) and age-old rites is very widely practised among Korean Christians. On the anniversary of the day on which an ancestor died, the family, kinfolk and close church friends, including ministers, gather for a service that includes prayers, hymns, reading of the Bible and a benediction. In such memorial services one can sometimes detect elements reminiscent of shamanism. For example, in their prayers the minister and lay leader may recount recent happenings in the family, naming the members of the family one by one, as if reporting to the deceased what has happened to the survivors. Likewise, they ask God's special favours for every member of the family and express their hope that the deceased will be at peace. Typically long prayers are often interrupted by exclamations of amens, sorrowful sighs and sobs.

It is evident in such prayers that ministers or lay leaders are expected to be skilled mediums to invoke the descent of God or of ancestral and other spirits to help them to transcend their limitations and to negotiate directly with God or the spirits for supernatural help. One can notice that, in a worldview which blends Confucianism and shamanism and now also Christianity, everything is believed to happen only with the mysterious working of the divine providence of the supernatural. After the service the participants share a feast reminiscent of traditional ritual food and drink.<sup>12</sup>

For women who have left their native village either by marrying or by relocation, such a compromise measure, which allows an active opportunity to express filial feelings and ancestral veneration, has a great attraction. Korean women find in such an arrangement a convenient way to manage the conflict between the traditional role expectations they have inherited and the desire they have acquired to be more independent and active members of society.

One way for Koreans to maintain their inherited symbolic patterns of meaning and way of life in a radically altered modern society has been to streamline the rites of ancestor veneration. Meeting the functional needs of task-performance in a modern capitalist industrial society has forced people to assert their individuality over against their loyalty to the family and the devotion to filial piety. Because such traditional virtues have provided spiritual integrity and emotional stability, the problem of ancestral rites no longer involves the question of Christianity confronting Confucianism so much as the issue of mutual adaptation of deeply ingrained feelings of filial piety and ancestral veneration to modern values and attitudes in a way that can be tenable in the unfolding modern society. Thus, the problems Korean churches face regarding the cult of ancestors are intertwined with the problem of how they will come to terms with modern culture. More specifically, what they have to cope with are the egoistical individualism, crass commercialism and utilitarianism that prevail in post-traditional society.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church in Korea has taken the initiative in meeting head on the problem of reinterpreting the traditional rites in a way that is viable in contemporary society. The Council marked the beginning of the Catholic Church's effort to renew its centuries-old structure, which was geared to triumphalism, legalism and clericalism. The reformist tone of the following statement from Vatican II is a far cry from almost two centuries of tragic memories involving the cult of ancestors in Korea:

Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the gospel of Christ or his church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience — those too may achieve eternal salvation.<sup>13</sup>

This is in effect a declaration that the church may go beyond the old exclusivist line of "no salvation outside the church". It could modify an oppressive structure which had been bent only on maintaining an institution that was alien to the world. With this change of direction there have been sporadic efforts by national churches to relate authentic Christian belief to the lives of men and women in the world. In the Korean church, this has led to efforts to reinterpret the time-honoured traditional ancestral cult in a way that respects what it has meant to Korean people and reconciles it with authentic Christian belief. The church would now allow local traditions and spiritual legacies to be retained and cherished, provided that they were not superstitious errors going against Christian faith and the common good.

The incarnation of the Word of God among us in the flesh meant that Jesus became a member of the Jewish community, not an amorphous universal person. This means that even today the Word of God can be incarnated in various cultures and among various peoples, assuming new life, revitalizing old cultures and renewing the peoples. Only ethnic churches which have truly accommodated the beauties of local traditions while reinterpreting and animating them in

the light of the universal meaning of the Word of God can contribute to the making of the authentic universal church. Only through such acts of reinterpretation can a local culture be transformed into a Christian one.

The fundamental purpose of Confucian ancestor rites is to express the spirit of filial piety by offering something in return for the benefits received from parents and ancestors and by keeping their memories alive. The emphasis on indebtedness or repaying ancestors for benefits received is not only Confucian but also Buddhist in spirit. For that matter, it can be Christian as well. The inclination to repay debts to parents can be linked to the debts we owe to all of our fellow-human beings, to society, to the world and eventually to God. If we can extend our intention to repay our parents to the ultimate benefactor, God, life can be one continuous expression of gratitude; and such a life-orientation can be a truly Christian one. A genuine understanding of filial piety can thus lead to a genuine attitude towards Christian living.<sup>14</sup>

One could consider the veneration of Confucius not as an act of worship but as an act of venerating a highly respected teacher. If so, there is no reason to proscribe such an act in the name of Christianity. Similarly, if one were to offer food to the dead, it could be seen as a gesture of respect and love for the person. Thus, "Common Directions of Korean Mission" (*Directorium commune missionum coreae*, 15 November 1958) no longer proscribed traditional ancestral rites. It stipulated that one may pay respects, make a low bow or even prostrate oneself before a dead body, a tomb or even a picture or tablet bearing the name of a dead person. Such actions were compared to the European custom of kneeling before a dead body. Furthermore, food offerings before the picture or tablet of a dead parent were permitted as long as they were seen as nothing more than a symbolic gesture of expressing grief in one's heart and love for the dead. Such an act was compared to the Western custom of laying flowers before a tomb. On the other hand, invoking

the return of the spirit of the dead person or hanging his clothes on the roof of a house to welcome his spirit were clearly forbidden as superstitious.

Recently "Korean Catholic Ministerial Directions" (*Han'guk Ch'onjugyo samok chichi'mso*) reconfirmed that the fundamental spirit of the rites is to repay one's ancestors by sacrifice and offer a return for the benefits received from parents, as well as to recognize the dignity of life and to deepen the consciousness of one's roots. Through such rites one can dedicate oneself to live a true life in accordance with the will of parents or ancestors while at the same time strengthening harmonious family ties. According to these "Directions", while encouraging the survival of the beautiful spirit of these inherited rites, we should amend their forms of expression in accordance with changing times.

What we find here is not a syncretistic accommodation, but rather an interesting effort to ferret out a significant cultural or religious orientation common among the Korean people and to purify this traditional religious orientation in the light of the Christian gospel while expressing it in terms acceptable to Christianity.<sup>15</sup>

It is important for us to note how "the Word become flesh" and the universal love of God revealed in Jesus Christ are manifested in particular contexts and through particular cultures. After all, it is culture that provides the patterns in terms of which we respond to the call of the gospel. In connection with the localization of expressions of faith and worship among Korean Christians in terms of their own cultural tradition, we may look briefly at some other examples. For instance, although the adaptation is not widely followed, some Korean congregations have made attempts to use rice wine or water and rice cakes, which have a special meaning for the Korean people, in the eucharist — an interesting departure from the received way of using bread and wine according to the pattern of the Mediterranean culture.

Another case is the celebration of Thanksgiving Day. This began in Korean churches with the introduction of the



tradition from the USA. It is usually observed on a Sunday in November, since there is no corresponding public holiday. Nor have Korean Christians adopted the US tradition of a large family dinner for Thanksgiving Day. But a few congregations in Korea celebrate Thanksgiving Day on the traditional Korean autumn festival called *ch'usok*, which usually falls between the end of September and the middle of October (depending on the calculation by lunar calendar). *Ch'usok* is one of the most important sacred days when Korean people visit their ancestors' graves to pay their respects to them and give thanks for the autumnal harvests. On this day Koreans eat cakes made from freshly harvested rice and other fruits of the earth. By observing this traditional holiday in the spirit of thanksgiving to God, Korean Christians could give it a new meaning and significance; and this could be an interesting way to assimilate their faith into their own local context.

In a similar way, some Korean Christians have made innovative attempts to use authentic local forms in hymns and, to a lesser degree, in prayers, invocations and the architecture of church buildings. Through these attempts they have tried to re-present older religious attitudes and sentiments within the pattern of Christian culture.<sup>16</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> An, *Ch'onhak mundap*, p.19a.

<sup>2</sup> See the tract "On the Calamitous Influences of the Perverse Teachings of the West" by Yi Hang-no (1792-1868), in Chai-sik Chung, *A Korean Confucian Encounter with the Modern World: Yi Hang-no and the West*, Berkeley, University of California Institute of East Asian Studies, 1995, pp.172ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *70th Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (1888), New York, 1889, p.339; George Heber Jones, "The Status of Women in Korea", *The Korean Repository*, Vol. 3, June 1896, pp.226-27.

- <sup>4</sup> Jones, *loc. cit.*, pp.227f.
- <sup>5</sup> C. C. Vinton, "Obstacles to Missionary Success in Korea", *The Missionary Review of the World*, Vol. 7, Nov. 1894, p.841.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Doctrine of the Mean*, tr. J. Legge, Vol. 2 of *The Chinese Classics*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong U.P., 1970, p.404.
- <sup>7</sup> Cf. Charles Dallet, *Histoire de l'Eglise de Corée*, Paris, Librairie Victor Palme, 1874, Vol. 1, pp.34f.
- <sup>8</sup> *Chongjo sillok* [The veritable record of King Chongjo], 48:481Ua (1791.11.7), 481Lb-483Ua (1791.11.8).
- <sup>9</sup> Cf. Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 1982, pp.182, 185.
- <sup>10</sup> Chai-sik Chung, "Protestantism and the Formation of Modern Korea 1884-1894", Dissertation, Boston University, 1964, pp.77-80, 229-39.
- <sup>11</sup> Roger L. Janelli and Dawnhee Yim, "Ancestor Worship in a South Korean Village", paper presented at a conference on "Interaction of East and West in Korean Culture", University of Texas, Austin, Feb. 1996.
- <sup>12</sup> Youngsook Kim Harvey, "The Korean Shaman and the Deaconess: Sisters in Different Guises", in Laurel Kendall and Griffin Dix, eds, *Religion and Ritual in Korean Society*, Berkeley, University of California Institute of East Asian Studies, 1987, pp.163-68, makes an interesting case, though not all Korean Christian memorial services in fact exhibit the shamanistic elements she describes.
- <sup>13</sup> Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, para. 16.
- <sup>14</sup> Cf. Yun Song-bom, *Hyo* [Filial Piety], Seoul, Taehan Kidokkyo sohoe, 1977, chap. 1.
- <sup>15</sup> Kim Chong-su, "*Chont'ong cherye uisik kwa kyohoe yejon ui mannam*" [The meeting of traditional ancestral rites and Christian church rituals], in *Mirae kyohoe wa sae yoksa* [Future churches and a new ministry], Seoul, Mirae kyohoe yon'guwon, 1996, pp. 167-89.
- <sup>16</sup> For other interesting observations along these lines, cf. Yi Chong-hun, "*Han'guk munhwa wa yebae*" [Korean culture and worship], *ibid.*, pp.190-227.

### 3. *The Gospel as Transformer of Culture*

No less important than the issue of dressing the gospel in local cultural clothes, adapting it to a given local culture, is the question of how the gospel criticizes and transforms that culture and society. The encounter between Christianity and Korean culture involves not only a process of inculturating Christianity in Korea but also a movement towards the Christian transformation of existing Korean culture and values into a new pattern of synthesis with the gospel's moulding influence. There is thus a simultaneous dialectic of radical disruption and perpetuation.

If "religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion", as Paul Tillich put it,<sup>1</sup> Western culture is unthinkable apart from its Judaeo-Christian heritage. Similarly, Korean culture, personality and society cannot be imagined apart from the shamanistic, Buddhistic, Confucian and Taoistic worldviews. It is very difficult to draw a sharp boundary line here between religion and culture.

The quality of religion and culture is ultimately judged in terms of their consequences, that is, how do they contribute to making human beings? For example, what does the Great Commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbour as yourself", mean in the realm of moral action? How can we practise our faith through love in obedience to the Great Commandment? How does such faith-motivated action lend itself to becoming historically relevant in concrete social and institutional action that stands in tension with a given culture and society? Christianity claims to be the good news of hope for people in the darkness of despair and hopelessness. It promises to make a broken world whole and to bring hope to a fragmented humanity. The gospel promises the liberation of those who are oppressed by dominant groups. It also liberates those who suffer under the crushing impact of such modernizing and globalizing forces as the transnational market economy, technology, depersonalization and secularization. The gospel is a liberating force in the everyday life of human beings, transforming human beings and their culture.

Protestant Christianity happened to appear in Korea at a moment in history when their traditional religions had lost vitality and meaning in the lives of the Korean people. For a long time Buddhism, a great historic religion from India which came to Korea by way of China, had given the Korean people a transcendental spiritual reference. It had enriched the spiritual foundation of the aristocratic artistic creations of the Three Kingdoms period. Especially the Contemplative School (*Son*) of Buddhism, which flourished during the Koryo period, contributed to the spiritual life of the Korean people by cultivating their minds. In time, however, Buddhism, which had enjoyed the patronage of the state during the Koryo dynasty (918-1392), had become corrupt and moribund. Quickly losing its transcendent universals, Buddhism barely survived by serving the worldly needs of the people, syncretistically incorporating within itself such folk religious beliefs and practices as geomancy, the *yin-yang* theory and shamanism. Having lost its spiritual vitality, Buddhism could not meet the needs of Korean society during the waning days of the Koryo dynasty to revitalize its tenuous social structure and the state. It was thus ripe for replacement by another fresh ideology or religion; and Neo-Confucianism, imported from Mongol China, came to fill the need.

During the succeeding Yi dynasty, which lasted until 1910, it was Neo-Confucianism that defined the cultural orientation. At first it showed a fresh vitality to lead Korean society as its orthodox religion or ideology. Not only did it form the bases of Korean society and the state, but it also defined the nature of human life and the structures of the family and ancestor worship. For a while it acted as the catalyst for a far-reaching reformation of Yi society. But once Neo-Confucianism was firmly established as the state-sponsored orthodoxy, it too came to lose its original vigour and spiritual meaning and eventually became a merely formal tradition.<sup>2</sup> In particular it became irrelevant to the masses, who continued to hold on to folk religions, with

diverse blends of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.<sup>3</sup> Even so, a visitor noted, these religions were weaker or “less firmly entrenched than in most Asiatic countries”.<sup>4</sup> The Presbyterian Horace Allen, the first Protestant resident medical missionary in Korea, who arrived in 1884, diagnosed that the moribund state of the traditional religions and “the strange want of any one distinct and controlling religion... provided the fertile soil for the inception and growth of a new faith [Protestant Christianity]”.<sup>5</sup> The country was ready to receive a new, dynamic religion to fill the spiritual void; thus the timing was auspicious for the beginning of Protestant mission work in Korea.

From the 1880s, the first decade of Protestant mission, until the annexation of Korea by imperial Japan in 1910, one issue dominated Korean politics: should the country actively take the road of modernization or should it stay behind the wall of isolationism as long as it could? The crux of the question was whether to compromise the traditional Confucian morality and social structure in the interest of modernization or to preserve it at any cost. The watchword of the progressive elements, who wanted to emulate Japan and China and become an independent modern country with wealth and power, was *kaehwa* (“enlightenment”), which meant, in sum, the transformation of outdated Korean traditions by means of Western civilization. For the conservative elite it was not easy to shake loose the vestiges of the tradition. They understood Korea to be a Confucian state, holding on to the Confucian worldview and values even more loyally than China, the home of Confucianism. The idea of transforming this venerated traditional culture by means of Western civilization was a very difficult pill to swallow.<sup>6</sup>

Even many of the progressive leaders were not completely free of the Confucian worldview, values and ways of thinking. But changing times made it impossible for them to hold back from implementing measures to modernize Korea. They came to believe that the West derived its military,

technological and economic strengths from its education and knowledge of science, and that these in turn were embedded in the substance of Western culture, that is Christianity. It is significant that they considered Western education, knowledge, science and religion as an interrelated whole.

Among the advocates of modern reforms, Pak Yong-hyo (1861-1939), who had seen modern Japan as a chief delegate of the Korean goodwill mission there in 1882, made an interesting case for reforming his country. Astutely, Pak discerned that what Korea needed most was the moral transformation of its people. Since he saw religion as "the foundation of moral transformation" (*kyohwa chi pon*), he concluded: "if religion declines, a nation declines, and if religion rises, a nation does likewise." In the Western nations, Pak observed, both Catholicism and Protestantism were flourishing; and as a result Western nations were at the height of their strength. In contrast, the religious situation of his own country was in sad shape. Buddhism and Confucianism had lost their vigour, and he saw little chance of their ever being revitalized. He envisaged, therefore, that Korea would become a pluralistic society in which various religions, including the newcomer Protestant Christianity, would co-exist in free competition with each other.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, it was not long before a well-organized, richly funded and aggressively motivated Christian missionary movement would achieve a remarkable ascendancy, in a relatively short time, to an influential religion in the country. Pak himself did not become a Christian. Yet some of the leading advocates of modern reform did convert to Christianity, recognizing that "one hope of the country [lay] in the power of Christianity and Christian education".<sup>8</sup>

Typically these leaders of the modernization of Korea saw in Christianity a convenient means to reform the country into an independent, modern nation. Most of them confused Christianity with the cultural artifacts of the modern West which came in the same package, ranging from modern democratic education, science and arts to capitalist econo-

mics, the dignity and equity of laws, human dignity and human rights, the spirit of tolerance and democratic egalitarianism.<sup>9</sup> This was not what the missionaries had primarily in mind when they came to Korea. Their goal was to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. They opened schools, orphanages and hospitals only as means to further their ultimate objective, the evangelization of the Korean people. It was uncomfortable for the missionaries to encounter Koreans who were quite willing to receive Western science and technology but reluctant to accept Christianity.<sup>10</sup> The missionaries' goal was to depoliticize Christianity by introducing it as a spiritual movement, so that it might "bear civil and social fruits... in proportion as they [were] the fruits of a spiritual and unworldly Christianity".<sup>11</sup>

### **"A holy nation of Jesus"**

Deep down, Korea's problem was more fundamental than something that could be solved merely by accepting the advanced cultural artifacts of the West. The one who made this diagnosis of the Korean situation was So Chae-p'il (Philip Jaisohn). He was the founder of the Independence Club (*Tongnip hyophoe*, 1896-1898), which was a trail-blazer in introducing the democratic ideas of liberty, civil rights and independence in Korea. So argued that it was foolish to pursue the branches (that is, functional Western means) while forsaking the roots (that is, Christianity). The secret of the inner strength of the Western civilization was found in Christianity. In contrast, the trouble with Korea was that the substance of its culture, Confucianism, was at its lowest ebb. For Korea to survive it was imperative to accept Christianity as a the new ideological foundation of the nation.<sup>12</sup>

Yun Ch'i-ho (1865-1945), So's associate at the Independence Club, who became the first Korean to be baptized as a Methodist in 1887, was trained at Vanderbilt and Emory Universities in the United States. As revealed in his diary,<sup>13</sup> Yun's spiritual immersion in Christianity was even deeper than So's. Yun saw himself as an instrument of God for the

realization of Korea as “a holy nation of Jesus” (9, 22 March, 3 April 1887, 29 Dec. 1888, 16 April 1889, 6 Nov. 1892). In thus dedicating himself to God, Yun explained why he had become a Christian, a Protestant, a Trinitarian and, specifically, a Methodist. He maintained that “a religion that does not work (accomplish its proposed end) is worse than no religion” (1 Jan. 1894). Apparently he had in mind the traditional religions of Korea, especially Confucianism, whereas what impressed him most in Christianity was its “can do” spirit in history and real life. Christianity had “a living moral or rather spiritual power to enable us to do what we know to be right and true” (18 May 1890), while the humanistic ethic of Confucianism merely made people proud and selfish and enslaved them to the sterile rituals of filial piety (18 May 1890, 12 Dec. 1893, 11 March 1894). Yun found Confucianism particularly repugnant because of its particularistic or patrimonial orientations. Such orientations confined people to the family, village and the monarchical state, without any sense of “public spirit” or participation as citizens in the common good (11 March 1894, 6 April 1902, 27 May 1904). His verdict was that both Confucianism and Buddhism were obsolete. Or, he thought, “even better, they had to go” (12 Dec. 1893). Thus he urged people not to be afraid of being “radical and destructive” in dealing with Confucianism and Buddhism (19 Dec. 1893).

According to Yun, the basic trouble of his country was its inherited cultural tradition, which had frozen the people’s motivation and prevented them from independently cultivating knowledge, intelligence, moral integrity and patriotism. Unless this national defect were overcome, independence was out of the question. And the way out of this difficulty, as Yun saw it, was Protestantism. “Only Protestantism”, not the corrupt government, was fit to assume the task of “restoring the spiritual fibre of the people”. Thus, Yun, a new person, born again in Christ, committed himself to the mission of creating “a holy nation of Jesus” out of the old and decadent Korea (30 March 1889). Protestantism gave him a new



purpose and discipline to lead a more meaningful life and the courage to cut himself free from a long and hackneyed cultural tradition and a closed traditional society. It was also a new ideology that gave him a transcendent perspective from which to question the worn-out tradition and to envision an alternative order — a new, free and independent Korea.

The cases of So and Yun demonstrate how Protestantism came to Korea at an opportune time as a new ideology to fill the void created by the dying old order. Yi Kwang-su, the foremost writer of the period, said it brought to Korea the “dawning light” of Western civilization.<sup>14</sup> One turn-of-the-century visitor to the Korea mission field put it this way: “the gospel always has been and always will be a revolutionary force in a corrupt nation”. It had provided “a sturdy independence, a moral fibre, a fearless protest against wrong” among the Puritans in England and in New England. Similarly, it brought about a “bloodless revolution” in the waning days of the old Korea.<sup>15</sup>

Yun’s daring diagnosis of the problems of his society was original and perceptive. He saw rightly that Korea desperately needed a new ideology or religion to help the people to cope with the problems of meaning that were arising in the transition to the modern world. With its emphases on the individual, history and dynamic spirituality and its ethically oriented activism, Protestantism was a fresh and provocative attraction to people looking for alternative worldviews and values.

Seen from today’s perspective, Yun appears as one who, following the spirit of the time, identified Christianity with a supposedly superior Western culture. He devalued Korean religious tradition as mired in unhistoricity, fatalism, powerlessness and group egoism. Today, we are much more conscious of the problems of cultural pluralism and cultural identity. For example, we are trying to express the Christian gospel with greater sensitivity to the nuances of cultural differences. At the same time we are more aware of the

difficulty of translating the Christian message into local languages and worldviews.

The problem of de-Westernizing Christianity, which was so closely associated with Western culture and civilization during its period of expansion, is a very timely issue.<sup>16</sup> After all, the gospel is never culturally neutral: it is always contextually embedded and translated into a local language. But the Christian faith is also a radically liberating message which affirms the dignity of the person in the context of otherness and difference. In his own times and in his own way, Yun took the initiative by contextualizing the Christian faith in the historically given conditions of his society, relating it to the question of human liberation and betterment.

Historically, dynamic Christianity, with its liberating force, puts the gospel to work in everyday life. Throughout much of the 20th century, this characteristic of the gospel, which impressed Yun so much, would also engage the next generations of Korean Christians in dynamic politically oriented Christian activism. Until the tremendous growth of the Christian population in Korea in recent decades, Christians were a small minority. But as noted above, their social and political influence has been far out of proportion to their numbers. The Christian leadership in the so-called March First Independence Movement of 1919 (to regain Korea's lost independence through a nationwide peaceful protest movement) stands out as an especially glorious monument in the history of Korea's nationalist movement. In addition, Christianity was involved in the resistance to Japanese imperialism and later in modernizing endeavours.

For these reasons, the Korean people as a whole have received Christianity as a tremendously positive force in the nation's struggle for independence and development. This is an interesting phenomenon in view of the fact that elsewhere in the world Christianity has more often than not been regarded as an agent of the expansion of Western colonialism. The Korean Christian activists who have prophetically witnessed against political repression and social injustice

since the 1960s have been a small minority. Yet they can be seen as latter-day representatives of the pioneering tradition, which grasped the essence of the gospel as the transformer of culture, society and human beings. This is especially the case with the advocates of the so-called *minjung* theology, a political theology that represents the interests of the oppressed people, or *minjung*.<sup>17</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948, p.57.
- <sup>2</sup> About this sweeping generalization regarding the religious situation in traditional Korea, see further Chung, *A Korean Confucian Encounter with the Modern World*, chap. 1.
- <sup>3</sup> George Heber Jones, "The Spirit Worship of the Koreans", *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 2/1, 1901, p.39.
- <sup>4</sup> Arthur J. Brown, "Report of a Visitation of the Korea Mission of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA", September 1901, p.12.
- <sup>5</sup> H. N. Allen, "The Hour for Korea", *The Foreign Missionary*, Vol. 44, Sept. 1885, p.153.
- <sup>6</sup> Chai-sik Chung, "Tradition and Ideology: Korea's Initial Response to Christianity from a Religious and Sociological Perspective", *Asia Munhwa* [Asian Culture], Vol. 4, Sept. 1988, pp.133-35.
- <sup>7</sup> *Nihon gaiko bunsho* [Diplomatic Document of Japan], Vol. 21, no. 106, Tokyo, Nihon kokusai rengo kyokai, 1949, p.307.
- <sup>8</sup> Robert E. Speer, *Report on the Mission in Korea*, New York, Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1897, p.33.
- <sup>9</sup> Chung, "Protestantism and the Formation of Modern Korea," pp.199-250, 266-74.
- <sup>10</sup> Chung, "Tradition and Ideology", *loc. cit.*, pp.140f.
- <sup>11</sup> Speer, *op. cit.*, pp.33-35.
- <sup>12</sup> "Nonsol" [Editorial], in *Tongnip sinmun* [The Independent], 12 Sept. 1899; "What Korea Needs Most", *The Korea Repository*, Vol. 3, March 1896, p.109.
- <sup>13</sup> The quotations that follow are from *Yun Ch'i-ho ilgi* [Yun Ch'i-ho's diary], 7 vols, Seoul, Kuksa p'yonch'an wiwonhoe, 1973-1986.

- <sup>14</sup> Yi Kwang-su, "The Benefits Which Christianity Has Conferred on Korea", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. 15, Feb. 1918, p.35.
- <sup>15</sup> Arthur J. Brown, *op. cit.*, p.6
- <sup>16</sup> See Chai-sik Chung, "Confucian-Protestant Encounter in Korea: Two Cases of Westernization and De-Westernization", in Peter K.H. Lee, ed., *Confucian-Christian Encounters in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, Lewiston, NY, Edwin Mellen Press, 1991, pp.399-433.
- <sup>17</sup> Cf. Chai-sik Chung, "Global Theology for the Common Good: Lessons from Two Centuries of Korean Christianity", *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 85, no. 339, Oct. 1996, pp.523-38. On *minjung* theology, see further chap. 4, pp.38-41.

## 4. *Inculturation and Submerged Christian Transcendence*

### **The predominance of conservatism**

Undeniably, Christianity has provided Korea with dynamic political leadership in the areas of nationalism, social development and democratization. Yet it should be noted that social activism has been a phenomenon limited to a minority of Christians. The predominant cultural tendency of Korea has usually been exceedingly conservative, with individuals socialized to follow loyally the rigidly prescriptive social norms and mores and having very limited opportunities to stray from them. Toleration of heterodoxy or deviation has never been a cultural characteristic of Korean society, and religion in this culture has typically played a decisive role in shaping and legitimizing oppressive power relations.

This has been particularly true among the privileged classes, who of course have every reason not to disturb the traditional social structure. Specifically, the ethic of the *yangban*, the ruling elite of political office-holders and intellectuals with privileges such as land-holding and accessibility to offices, forced them to achieve an internal harmony within themselves, or with heaven, and an external harmony with society. Gaining inner harmony through rigid self-control was linked to subjecting their own emotions, individuality and way of life to a strict code of ethics that supported the status quo. The status ethic of the *yangban*, who were the bearers of a relatively unvaried Confucian culture, encouraged a way of life that lent itself to legitimating the powers-that-be and the oppressive dimensions of culture. It was unthinkable for them to promote a religious doctrine of salvation which included a prophetic message that could challenge the existing social structure. Harmonious adjustment to the world, rather than heroic mastery over it or prophetic initiative to change it characterized the spirit of the religion and ethic of the privileged classes.

The privileged stratum of *yangban* had a vested interest in preventing the religious life of the masses from turning into a millennialist religion or an ethic of radical salvation.

For the most part, the religious life and beliefs of the masses were a matter of benign neglect for the elite. But they looked askance at *Chonggam-nok* prognostication and firmly suppressed the religion of *Tonghak* or Eastern Learning, since these would pose a potential threat to their privileges and authority. Similarly, any burgeoning movement among the masses towards a form of millennialistic salvation would have alarmed government authorities and the ruling elite.

The religion and ethic of the privileged sought personal integrity, social harmony and a good name after death. The religion of the masses was primarily concerned with material well-being and the expulsion of evil spirits that brought misfortune to them; thus it focussed on the pursuit of this-worldly goals such as good harvests, children, health and long life. So long as the masses piously obeyed the authorities, followed the ethic of the status society and respected the elites, popular religion served as a good instrument to domesticate them. Thus both the religion and ethic of the privileged elites and the piety of the masses fostered traditionalism. The proven method for both the elites and the masses was to perpetuate the bequeathed patterns of religious life from generation to generation. In a culture in which such religiosity was deeply ingrained, docile adjustment to the world, rather than open-ended attempts to reshape society and culture, was the accepted way of life. Thus Korean traditional religion effectively blocked social change.

Even after the advent of Christianity this traditionalism, with its affinity for shamanistic magic and the affirmation of the status quo, has continued to prevail. This religiosity has been the most important means by which Korean culture has shaped the structure of social life, and the story of the inculturation of the gospel in Korea cannot be told apart from the context of the persistence of this pattern of religiosity, which debilitates the power of the gospel. Because this pattern is so ingrained in Korean culture and personality, Korean Christians are often not even conscious of being captive to their inherited religiosity. In understanding the

gospel, however, we are called to witness in the context of our culture. This means that Christians should identify, criticize and reject those elements in their inherited culture that erode the power of the gospel.

### **Shamanism and Christianity**

The world of the primordial Korean popular religious consciousness was a one-dimensional realm in which gods, spirits, humans and nature co-existed without any clear delineation of the lines that separated them. Religious life centred on the shaman, who had special, magical relations with gods, spirits and nature in a trancelike condition induced by chanting, incantation, dancing and drumming. As mediator between humans and the pantheon of spiritual forces, the shaman could manipulate the latter to ensure the health, well-being, good fortune and longevity of the people. Beliefs and practices connected with the shaman's mediation with the world of spirits and gods, or shamanism, constitutes the enduring core of Korean religiosity. By catering to the people's this-worldly and utilitarian concerns such as health, longevity and good fortune, shamanism has profoundly influenced the culture and personality of the Korean people.

Shamanism is a highly fluid worldview, which has always blended easily into other forms of magic and such historical religions as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and even Christianity. Imported religions had to be modified and adapted to indigenous shamanistic elements before they could implant themselves in the Korean cultural soil. This protean and syncretistic tendency in shamanism shaped the basic characteristics of the religiosity of the Korean people.<sup>1</sup>

How did Christianity accommodate itself to the syncretistic and magical folk religiosity embedded in the shamanism which lurks so deeply within the Korean psyche? The most marked characteristic of Korean popular Christianity, whether Protestant or Catholic, is its affirmation of this-worldly values such as physical health, material abundance and good fortune here and now. By accommodating them-

selves to this dominant religious proclivity for affirming the values of this world, Korean churches have unwittingly, and sometimes deliberately, adopted shamanistic practices. The greater the accommodation, the more the beliefs and rituals that appear on the surface to be Christian are at bottom shamanistic in substance.

Various churches have compromised in different ways with shamanistic culture, but in general the churches that have adapted themselves more extensively with this indigenous magical religiosity have proved to be more dynamic in terms of numerical growth than those which have not. Perhaps the most salient example of such compromise can be seen in the case of the Pentecostal Full Gospel Church. It boasts a membership that is growing by leaps and bounds, expecting to reach almost a million people within a few years.

The central message of the Full Gospel Church is the "threefold blessings" found in the second verse of the Third Letter of John in the New Testament. The blessings are recast to mean both well-being for the believer in this world (particularly in terms of material blessing) and good health and wellness of soul here and in the next world. What a good way to eat one's pheasant and its eggs as well, as the Korean expression puts it! This theology of good fortune stipulates that all it takes for one to have access to these triple blessings is to go through an ecstatic revivalistic experience of being caught up with the Holy Spirit. The church also imposes Pharisaic tithing in a spirit reminiscent of Buddhist belief in *karma* (without realizing this or at least without acknowledging it). Latent in these endeavours is a calculating and utilitarian mentality which fits in well with the current ethos of a crassly materialistic, newly industrializing society that worships mammon.

The rapid expansion of the Full Gospel Church and similar mammoth entrepreneurial churches are examples par excellence of how the gospel in Korea has become captive to the power of consumerism and the market. In its captivity to



the market, the gospel ends up serving the vested interests of religious entrepreneurs allied with the ruling powers in society.<sup>2</sup> The operative frame of mind of many large-size Korean Pentecostal churches which boast of their rapid growth in membership and income is nothing other than a quantitative commercial mentality that measures everything, including matters of devoutness and faith, in figures. What counts in these churches is *counting*: how many attended the service, how many gave testimonies as born-again Christians, and, most important, how much money was received on a given Sunday. Growth measured in tangible figures is what such churches are really about. Therefore, one could easily suspect that what they actually worship is not God but gold.

Another characteristic trait in Korean Christian life is the identification of faith with a subjective experience of holiness detached from living a sanctified life. Often in the world of Korean spirituality, the experience of the Christian Holy Spirit is confused with shamanistic trances and Pentecostal weeping, prancing, waving of arms and glossolalia. It is frequently difficult to tell whether those who are singing, giving testimony, dancing and speaking in tongues are in shamanistic possession or are experiencing a form of Christian spirituality. In many typical incantatory prayers with the repeated uttering of such phrases as "Hallelujah!" or "O Lord!", with many in the congregation joining in a chorus of Amens and weeping and waving their arms, an observer cannot help wondering if the whole thing is more shamanistic than Christian. Ecstatic trances, spirit possession, speaking in tongues and exorcism are staples in typical Korean Pentecostal and evangelistic Christian churches. The question arises whether these practices do not amount to shamanism in the more modern and stylistically agreeable guise of Christianity. Certainly when these practices become ritualistic ends in themselves, only the barren forms remain and the genuine message of the gospel disappears.

### **The expansion of foreign mission**

In the context of the rapid growth of Pentecostal and evangelistic Christianity in Korea, mention should be made of the trend since the 1970s of sending out large numbers of Korean missionaries abroad. Although precise statistical data are not available, one estimate is that by June 1994 there were nearly 3300 Korean missionaries in 119 countries around the world. The aim of the Korean World Missions, operating both in South Korea and in North America, is to fan out 10,000 Korean missionaries to various countries in the world by the year 2000. Pouring their faith energy into their calling, Korean missionaries, many of whom come from the more conservative sectors of the already predominantly conservative Korean churches, have set up their denominationally affiliated congregations, schools, social service agencies and hospitals overseas.<sup>3</sup>

Behind this expansionist missionary movement is the strong and fervent spiritual energy of the Pentecostals and the evangelicals. The churches to which these people belong are entirely oriented to mission and numerical growth at home and overseas. With the same quantitative entrepreneurial mentality that counts everything in figures, and with the same acumen in business matters and organization that has fed church growth at home, these churches are bent on expansion. To extend their overseas outreach they spend their resources and human capital liberally.

The mentality that gauges church growth in terms of measurable quantity seems to jibe well with the virtual religion of the acquisitive society of South Korea today, which venerates the exportation of products overseas as the lifeblood of the country and the measure of national stature abroad. Overseas missionary outreach is also in line with the trend toward "internationalization" or "globalization", which are frequently used buzzwords in the everyday vocabulary of Korean society today. It appears that pure missionary zeal, driven by the Great Commission to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth, has been a spur to the missionary

endeavour. At the same time, though, many young ministerial aspirants, mass-produced by some 270 theological schools which spew out an astonishing 8000 graduates annually, have very limited opportunities at home. Accordingly, some of these surplus ministerial candidates have jumped aboard and followed the mission abroad.

The prime movers behind the Christian missionary movements marching through the poverty-stricken peripheral areas of Latin America, Asia and Africa today are no longer the so-called mainline Christians in the rich countries. Rather, it is those who were themselves once poor and helpless but now have overcome poverty and seen the signposts to the promised land of plenty as their countries have come of age economically. Many Korean Christians would unhesitatingly attribute the remarkable economic success of their country in the past decades to God's blessing. According to a kind of theodicy of good fortune, they account for Korea's economic achievements as a special providence of God by whose grace they were chosen as a "holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9). With this faith that they are "God's own people", chosen to run errands in the deprived parts of the world, they go out to spread the gospel to the poor and the miserable of the earth in payment for the "wonderful deeds" of the one who called them "out of darkness into his marvellous light".

Understanding their Christian faith in this way also fits in well with the Korean religious imagination. For as we noted earlier, Korean Confucian scholars and officials at the end of the 19th century were accustomed to believe that their country stood alone as the last remaining guardian of the ecumenical East Asian Confucian culture against the onrush of the West and Christianity.<sup>4</sup> Now under the changed conditions of the secular world today, many Korean Christians would consider themselves as the good Christian soldiers who would hand on the torch of Christianity to the dark world.

Whether or not this interpretation, which is largely based on my own subjective impressions, is correct, it seems

undeniable that Korean missionary expansionism has moved in the direction of a right-wing political alliance and towards a gospel of prosperity and entrepreneurial religious growth. Engrossed by numerical expansion, the Korean missionary movement also seems to have forsaken ethical transcendence and Christian social responsibility. This moral failure has been the source of increasing criticism, levelled at the church both from within and outside, and questioning for example the allocation of church funds.

After years of unrestrained expansion, the Korean missionary movement, hailed in some quarters as the new vanguard of global world missions, may be facing difficulties for other reasons. For one thing, Korean missionaries have anachronistically carried over into their mission fields the very attitude of Christian triumphalism which an earlier generation of Korean Christians experienced under their former Western missionary teachers. For another, they have neither a sophisticated understanding of local cultures nor a respect for them. Furthermore, their overtly achievement-oriented culture plus their traditional authoritarian leadership style often seems to rub those to whom they are bringing the gospel the wrong way. Thus the advocates of overseas missionary endeavours may appear more like hard-charging entrepreneurs or fervent evangelists driven by a hunger to do "God's business" as managed by a denominational body than like Old Testament prophets or even Christian clergy.

### ***Minjung theology***

While this expansionist missionary movement has fit in well with the new wave of a growing export-oriented economy and the commercialization of human life, it has been shamefully out of touch with the need for a prophetic critique of Korean society. In this context, Korean churches are challenged to remember the needs of the underside in their own backyard — the ones who live in the shadow of this growth-oriented capitalist economy. In the 1970s and 1980s, when Korean society was beginning its extraordinary

economic growth, those who paid the highest price for it were the oppressed people, or *minjung*. These were the people who made possible South Korea's so-called economic "miracle of the Han River" with their low wages and the denial of their human rights and dignity as workers.

In the face of these dreadful conditions, more socially conscious elements in some of the Christian churches in Korea took part in organizing urban industrial workers and deprived farmers for protests and demonstrations. This resulted in the arrest and imprisonment of clergy and lay leaders. During these difficult times, newly imported theological themes then popular in Europe and North America — secularity, hope, indigenization, liberating revolution — caught the imagination of the more liberal Korean theological minds. Especially the theme of the liberation of the oppressed as developed in Latin America struck a responsive chord among Korean Christians with a social conscience.

The result was the emergence of the Korean version of liberation theology known as *minjung* theology. It drew its theological insights and themes from liberation theology and recent Western political theologies. At the same time, however, *minjung* theology appropriated folk cultural elements from shamanistic rituals and popular arts such as shaman dances, mask dances and epic story-telling through song (*p'ansori*) as contrasted to Confucian elitist arts. The political overtones of these rituals emphasized emancipation from the world of oppression and shamanistic psychic relief from pent-up emotions. *Minjung* theology also gravitated towards popular millennialistic religions with a message of social liberation, such as the *Tonghak*.<sup>5</sup>

An important element in *minjung* theology is the spirit of *han*. This somewhat elusive concept evokes the *ressentiment* of the rich by the poor, of the haves by the have-nots. The spirit of *ressentiment*, according to Max Scheler, arises when one feels deprived of the values that he or she desires and consequently feels resentful and envious of others who

possess them. Powerlessness in the face of the chronic, cumulative repression of thwarted wishes breeds hatred, malice, envy and spite. For the integrity and wholeness of the person these repressed emotions need to be released or mollified either through the attainment of the desired values or at least through psychological compensation.<sup>6</sup>

As the Korean *minjung* have repeatedly been the targets of oppression under foreign domination and injustice throughout their long history, they have turned inward and repressed both their impeded wishes and the resultant anger and resentment. Koreans have learned to express or relieve their wounded feelings (*hanp'uri*) through their various folk arts and especially shamanistic spirituality.

It is for this reason that some advocates of *minjung* theology gravitate towards shamanistic spirituality and Pentecostalism, both of which play upon the theme of relieving the sufferings of the masses, especially women, and healing their injured hearts. Both the primal, driving forces of shamanism and the energy of Pentecostal evangelism may have power for igniting enthusiasm for justice and energizing movements for social reconstruction. Even so, beyond the usual call for angry protest and psychic sublimation, *minjung* theologians have yet to establish a workable link between their Christian theology and indigenous popular arts and shamanistic spirituality. In order better to serve the needs of the suffering masses, they need to harness these primordial energies to more workable structures for the positive implementation of programmes.

One has the impression that "*minjung*" has become a more familiar theological word in ecumenical circles abroad than in South Korea itself. Why? At first, *minjung* theology emerged as a promising endeavour with provocative ideals that could challenge the social consciousness of the conservative churches in Korea, which had turned their backs on such issues as poverty, human rights and political oppression. It has turned out, however, that *minjung* theology has gone little further than the pace-setting endeavours by a

handful of theological intellectuals trained in the art of Western theological discourse. They had a sensitive ear to the cries of the suffering *minjung*. Yet while they spoke for the poor and the oppressed, they could not offer firsthand representations of the experiences lived by the people at the grassroots themselves. Furthermore, with its more or less exclusive approach of polarizing the haves and the have-nots, *minjung* theology has not achieved a large following among people of the middle class, who worry more about their everyday problems as wage earners and consumers than about the politics of social protest and reform.

The proper task for *minjung* theology — or any other form of Korean Christian social activism for that matter — would thus seem to be providing a more workable, integrated and transformative model to solve the problems arising in the context of Korean society in transition. A society that is now experiencing the disruptive changes of modernization and globalization does not need more of the customary “anti-” polemical debunking, antagonistic class confrontation and emancipatory rhetoric of *minjung* theology. Rather, what is called for are directive wisdom and a concrete political agenda, with programmes of action for consolidating civil society.

Some *minjung* theologians now seem to be caught in incongruities and tensions with the predominantly conservative forces in South Korean society. Under the circumstances, some have turned to such issues as denuclearization and peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula, while others have opted for an exclusivistic *minjung* nationalism. Yet the problem for any political theology in South Korea today is to come up with a practicable theological rationale and agenda for social reform and integration — a rationale and agenda that would not only strike the right chord among the *minjung* themselves but also influence the growing middle classes, who remain stubbornly conservative and apolitical.<sup>7</sup>

In conclusion, one cannot help asking the question: *Which Christianity* is going on in Korea today? Christians are called to witness within and not over against cultures, firmly implanting the gospel in our cultures and societies. Yet if we ask whether we are justified — in the name of affirming the independent integrity of local cultures — in allowing the prophetic transcendence of the Christian message to be submerged under the sheer weight of traditionalism, the answer is clearly No. One could however argue that Korean shamanism and folk religions have been the religions of the *minjung*, the underprivileged and oppressed, giving them the freedom to vent their frustrations and emotions. Or one could even say that from generation to generation shamanistic folk religions have often provided the underprivileged with a spiritual outlet allowing them to hope against the seemingly hopeless conditions of life, at times even acting as a symbolic catalyst for chiliastic social movements for radical social change.

With that positive element in view, one could then make the case that Korean shamanistic faith can be tapped in order to recover the faith energies and historical consciousness which are latent in the local culture of the underprivileged. One could thus maintain that such folk faith may be mobilized to improve the lot of the poor and oppressed. One could easily lend an attentive ear to such a siren call for the recovery of the past, especially in times like ours, when so many sense only uprootedness and directionlessness.

Could we really find a principle of hope by turning to past tradition? Though embedded in shamanistic spirituality, those selected elements in *minjung*-oriented folk culture with a strong social consciousness could be fruitfully reappropriated. One could even hope that the crass, materialistic egoism which currently prevails among the people could be channelled into more socially concerned political action for the common good of society and of those who are less well off.

In reality, however, shamanistic folk religions and Pentecostal Christianity have more often than not neglected the



social ethical dimension of religious life. Those few advocates of political theology for the oppressed who have resorted to shamanistic symbolism have been an exception; and even they have often proved to be highly irrelevant to the needs of the people by turning to unrealistic leftist movements and forming a strange alliance with exclusivistic nationalism.

The attempt to make use of the assortment of odds and ends available in traditional cultural material to meet the needs of the times involves a kind of cultural *bricolage*. A creative attempt is needed in our time to find a way out of this predicament. Today the dominant trend in the world is towards globalization in economics, science, technology and the environment. Under these circumstances, we are faced with the problem of how the elements in indigenous culture can be brought together with an emergent global culture. Theologically, this means asking more specifically how the gospel can be spoken in the context of local culture and the given local conditions of society with more relevance than has been the case. This in turn calls for a more sophisticated hermeneutical creativity than has so far been evident on the part of concerned scholars and leaders.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Chai-sik Chung, "Korea: The Continuing Syncretism", in *Religions and Societies: Asia and the Middle East*, Amsterdam, Mouton, 1982, pp.607-28.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. So Kwang-son, Chong Chin-hong, Han Wan-sang and Kim Kwang-il, *Han'guk kyohoe songnyong undong ui hyonsang kwa kujo* [The phenomena and structure of the Pentecostal movements in Korea], Seoul, Korea Christian Academy, 1982.

<sup>3</sup> Bong Rin Ro, "The Korean Church: Growing or Declining?", *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol.19, no. 4, Oct. 1995, p.347; cf. also Bong Rin Ro, "*Onul ui songyosa p'asong kwa chonmang ul ponda*" [On the missionary dispatch today and its prospect], *Mokhoe wa sinhak* [Ministry and Theology], May 1995, pp.45-48, as well as the five articles on gospel and globalization in the same issue.

- <sup>4</sup> Cf. Chai-sik Chung, *A Korean Confucian Encounter with the Modern World*, pp.137-42.
- <sup>5</sup> For an overview of *minjung* theology, cf. *Minjung kwa Han'guk sinhak* [*Minjung* and Korean theology], Seoul, Han'guk sinhak yon'guso, 1982; So Nam-dong, *Minjung sinhak ui t'amgu* [An enquiry into *minjung* theology], Seoul, Han'gil-sa, 1983; An Pyong-mu, *Minjung sinhak iyagi* [The story of *minjung* theology], Seoul, Han'guk sinhak yon'guso, 1987; and *Yoksa ap'e minjung kwa toburo* [Facing history along with *minjung*] Seoul, Han'guk sinhak yon'guso, 1987.
- <sup>6</sup> Max Scheler, *Problems of A Sociology of Knowledge*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, pp.19-21.
- <sup>7</sup> On this, see Chai-sik Chung, "Global Theology for the Common Good", *loc. cit.*